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TRAFFIC BY: INR/NEA: CKARP;DR
APPROVED BY: INR:POLARKE

INR/PMA:JZERCLIS
EUR/SOV:DFRIEL
NEA/PAB:EMILLIGAN
EAP/IMES:GCHRIST

S/S-C: JDBINDENAGEL
EAP:CSZYMANSKI
NEA:RPFOCK
CIA:HHADSHER
NEA/ARD:PEODINE
NEA/EGY:SSAVAGE
NEA/INS:DOAMP
IC:WFATON
LOD/ISA:SCHARLES
LIA:PAELSON

EXDIS REVIEW

- Cat. A Caption removed; transferred to O/FADRC
- Cat. B - Transferred to O/FADRC with additional access controlled by S/S
- Cat. C - Caption and custody retained by S/S

Reviewed by: Elijah Kelly Jr.

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AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE
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TAGS:

SUBJECT: BRIEFING ON SOVIET DECEPTION IN WITDRAWAL FROM AFGHANISTAN

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

REVIEWED BY EC DATE 7/29/87

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John Kelly
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2. [REDACTED] b-1, a-5

4. DOD PLANS A PRESS STATEMENT AND BACKGROUNDER FOR 30 OCTOBER USING A VERSION OF THE TEXT BELOW.

5. BEGIN TEXT OF BRIEFING.

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6. THE UNITED STATES HAS CLEAR AND CONVINCING EVIDENCE THAT SOVIET CLAIMS OF HAVING WITHDRAWN SIX REGIMENTS FROM AFGHANISTAN ARE SHAM AND DECEPTION. WHAT THE SOVIETS HAVE DONE IS TO REMOVE SOME UNNEEDED UNITS AND INTRODUCE OTHERS FOR THE PURPOSE OF WITHDRAWAL SO THAT THE NUMBER OF MILITARILY USEFUL TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN IS BASICALLY UNCHANGED.

7. IN HIS JULY 28 SPEECH AT VLADIVOSTOK, GORBACHEV ANNOUNCED, QUOTE:

8. "BEFORE THE END OF 1986, SIX REGIMENTS--ONE TANK REGIMENT, TWO MOTORIZED RIFLE REGIMENTS, AND THREE HELICOPTER REGIMENTS--WILL BE RETURNED FROM AFGHANISTAN TO THE HOMELAND, WITH THEIR AUTHORIZED EQUIPMENT AND ARMS. THESE UNITS WILL RETURN TO THEIR AREAS OF PERMANENT DEPLOYMENT IN THE SOVIET UNION AND IN SUCH A WAY THAT ALL THOSE WHO ARE INTERESTED CAN EASILY VERIFY THIS." (END QUOTE) THE SOVIET DEFENSE MINISTRY LATER ANNOUNCED THAT THE WITHDRAWAL WOULD BE COMPLETED BY THE END OF OCTOBER 1986. SOVIET MILITARY SPOKESMEN HAVE REPEATEDLY SPECIFIED THAT THE UNITS BEING WITHDRAWN HAD BEEN IN AFGHANISTAN FOR YEARS.

9. WHAT THE SOVIETS HAVE DONE IS MERE DECEPTION. BY

NATIONAL MEANS OF VERIFICATION, [REDACTED] b-1, a-5

[REDACTED] WE HAVE TRACKED THE UNITS IN QUESTION BEFORE GORBACHEV'S JULY 28 SPEECH AND THEREAFTER.

12. AIR DEFENSE. THE THREE AIR DEFENSE REGIMENTS WHICH GORBACHEV PROMISED TO WITHDRAW ARE CLEARLY NOT NEEDED IN AFGHANISTAN. THE MUJAHIDIN HAVE NO AIRFORCE. IN THE SEVEN YEARS OF THE WAR, SOVIET FORCES HAVE YET TO BE ATTACKED FROM THE AIR. CLEARLY THEY DO NOT FACE SUCH AN ATTACK IN FUTURE. THUS AIR DEFENSE UNITS PLAY NO

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SIGNIFICANT MILITARY ROLE IN AFGHANISTAN.

11. THE LACK OF SERIOUSNESS OF THE SOVIET WITHDRAWAL PROPOSAL CAN BE JUDGED FIRST BY RECOGNIZING THAT AIR DEFENSE UNITS COMPRISE HALF OF THE PROMISED SOVIET WITHDRAWAL PACKAGE. THUS IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT, SINCE THEY ARE UNNEEDED UNITS, THE SOVIETS DID INDEED GATHER THE AIR DEFENSE FORCES FROM THEIR VARIOUS LOCATIONS IN AFGHANISTAN AND DID REMOVE THEM TO THE SOVIET UNION AS GORBACHEV HAD PROMISED.

12. WE WATCHED THIS PROCESS START IN SEPTEMBER, WHEN THE SA-8 AIR DEFENSE REGIMENTS BEGAN TO RETURN TO THEIR HOME BASES FROM FIELD DEPLOYMENTS AT OTHER SOVIET GARRISONS. A BATTERY FROM KANDAHAR WENT TO SHINDAND. A UNIT FROM BAZRAM AIR BASE NORTH OF KABUL WAS PULLED INTO KABUL, WHERE ON OCTOBER 19 IT WAS WITHDRAWN FROM AFGHANISTAN WITH GREAT FANFARE. THE AIR DEFENSE REGIMENT FROM SHINDAND WAS ON ITS WAY TO THE SOVIET UNION BY OCTOBER 21 AND HAD ARRIVED BY OCTOBER 23. THE S-62 57MM AIR DEFENSE ARTILLERY REGIMENT FROM KUNDUZ--THE LAST OF THE SIX

REGIMENTS TO WITHDRAW--HAD DEPARTED FOR THE SOVIET UNION BY OCTOBER 28. AT ABOUT THE SAME TIME, THE SOVIETS DECLARED THAT THE WITHDRAWAL HAD BEEN COMPLETED.

13. TANK REGIMENT. THE TREATMENT OF SOVIET TANKS IN AFGHANISTAN WAS SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT. THE TANK REGIMENT STATIONED AT SHINDAND, THE ONLY SUCH REGIMENT IN AFGHANISTAN, WAS ALSO OF LITTLE MILITARY VALUE TO THE SOVIETS. IT WAS A SEVERELY UNDERSTRENGTH UNIT WITH ONLY 12 TANKS--NORMALLY SOVIET TANK REGIMENTS HAVE A COMPLEMENT OF OVER 80 TANKS. IT HAS NOT BEEN HEAVILY

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INVOLVED IN COMBAT, SINCE THE TERRAIN IN THE COUNTRY IS NOT SUITABLE FOR TANK WARFARE.

14. THE SOVIETS CLEARLY DID NOT BELIEVE THAT TO WITHDRAW ONLY 22 TANKS WOULD FULFIL GORBACHEV'S PLEDGE. SO THEY SENT ADDITIONAL TANKS INTO AFGHANISTAN AFTER HIS VLADIVOSTOK SPEECH EXPRESSLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF BEING ABLE TO WITHDRAW THEM. IN MID-SEPTEMBER ABOUT 40 TANKS ARRIVED FROM THE SOVIET UNION TO JOIN THE 22 TANKS AT SHINDAND. THEY WERE FOLLOWED BY AN ADDITIONAL 20 TANKS JOINED THE UNIT IN THE FIRST WEEK OF OCTOBER. ON ARRIVAL, THESE TANKS WERE WASHED SO THAT THEY COULD TAKE PART IN THE WITHDRAWAL CEREMONIES A FEW DAYS LATER. INDEED, ON OCTOBER 15, THE DAY PROMISED BY MOSCOW, WITHDRAWAL CEREMONIES BEGAN. CORRESPONDENTS REMARKED HOW THE VEHICLES SHOWED FEW SIGNS OF WEAR AND SAID THAT SOVIET SOLDIERS CLAIMED NEVER TO HAVE SEEN ANY INSURGENTS.

15. BY OCTOBER 16, THE RECONSTITUTED TANK REGIMENT AT SHINDAND HAD DEPARTED. THE TANK REGIMENT SLOWLY WORKED ITS WAY BACK TO THE USSR, WHERE IT WAS SUBSEQUENTLY SEEN

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AT A NEWLY PREPARED GARRISON NOT FAR FROM THE AFGHAN BORDER.

16. MOTORIZED RIFLE REGIMENTS (MRRS): THE MRRS REPRESENT THE MOST EXTENSIVE SOVIET EFFORT AT DECEPTION. OF ALL THE UNITS CITED BY GORBACHEV, ONLY THE MOTORIZED RIFLE REGIMENTS ARE IMPORTANT FOR MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST THE MUJAHIDIN. BUT WHILE THE SOVIETS INCLUDED SUCH MILITARILY USEFUL KINDS OF FORCES IN ORDER TO PRESENT A CREDIBLE WITHDRAWAL PACKAGE, THEY DID NOT WANT TO DAMAGE THE MILITARY EFFECTIVENESS OF SOVIET FORCES IN AFGHANISTAN. IN ORDER TO ACCOMMODATE THESE CONTRADICTIONARY GOALS THE SOVIETS SIMPLY BROUGHT IN NEW UNITS. THUS BOTH OF THE MOTORIZED RIFLE REGIMENTS THAT WITHDREW WERE UNITS

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THAT HAD ARRIVED IN AFGHANISTAN AFTER GORBACHEV'S SPEECH. 17. ON JULY 29, THE DAY AFTER GORBACHEV'S VLADIVOSTOK SPEECH, THE SOVIETS BEGAN TO BRING LARGE AMOUNTS OF COMBAT EQUIPMENT INTO AFGHANISTAN THROUGH TERMEZ IN THE EAST AND KUSHKA IN THE WEST. SOON AFTER, THE SOVIETS CONSTRUCTED FACILITIES FOR ADDITIONAL TROOPS AT SHINDAND AND KUNDUZ. IN THE LAST WEEK OF AUGUST ELEMENTS OF A NEW MOTORIZED RIFLE REGIMENT BEGAN TO ARRIVE IN KUNDUZ. IN THE WEST, BY THE END OF THE MONTH, A NEW MOTORIZED RIFLE REGIMENT HAD ARRIVED IN SHANDAND.

18. THESE NEW UNITS MOVED INTO AREAS OF THE SOVIET BASES NORMALLY OCCUPIED BY THE MOTORIZED RIFLE REGIMENTS WHICH WERE GARRISONED THERE. THE ORIGINAL MOTORIZED RIFLE REGIMENTS HAD MOVED OUT OF GARRISON FOR DEPLOYMENT IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. THE REGIMENT FROM SHINDAND DEPLOYED CLOSE BY. THE KUNDUZ REGIMENT CAMPED NEAR A FORMER SOVIET BIVOUAC 18 MILES NORTH OF THE KUNDUZ GARRISON. BOTH REGIMENTAL SUPPORT ELEMENTS UNITS REMAINED IN THE GARRISONS, BUT MOVED OFF TO THE SIDE TO MAKE ROOM FOR THE NEW UNITS. CONTINUED PRESENCE OF SUPPORT ELEMENTS WAS A GOOD INDICATION THAT THE ORIGINAL UNITS WOULD RETURN--TO

THEIR ORIGINAL PARKING PLACES.

19. THE NEWLY INTRODUCED MOTORIZED RIFLE REGIMENTS WERE FAR DIFFERENT IN EQUIPMENT FROM THE UNITS ORIGINALLY STATIONED AT THESE GARRISONS. SPECIFICALLY, THE NEWLY INTRODUCED REGIMENTS HAD TOWED ARTILLERY, AS CONTRASTED WITH SELF-PROPELLED ARTILLERY. IN ADDITION, THE NEW UNITS DID NOT HAVE TRACKED ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS, CALLED BMPs, USED BY BOTH ORIGINAL REGIMENTS AT SHINDAND AND KUNDUZ. INSTEAD, THEY HAD WHEELED VEHICLES CALLED

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BTRS. IN EACH CASE, TWO OF THE THREE MOTORIZED RIFLE BATTALIONS IN THE NEWLY INTRODUCED UNITS WERE EQUIPPED

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WITH TRUCKS. TO OPERATE EFFECTIVELY AND TO PROTECT TROOPS FROM MUJAHIDIN ATTACKS, THE SOVIETS HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN FORCED TO REPLACE TRUCKS IN ALL MOTORIZED RIFLE REGIMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN EXCLUSIVELY WITH ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS.

22. IN SEPTEMBER, THE INTRODUCTION OF THE NEW MOTORIZED RIFLE REGIMENTS WAS COMPLETE. THE SOVIETS THEN HAD 14 REGS IN AFGHANISTAN, AS CONTRASTED WITH THE 12 IN COUNTRY BEFORE THE GORBACHEV SPEECH. THE REGIMENTS IDENTIFIED FOR WITHDRAWAL BEGAN TO PREPARE FOR THE PUBLIC WITHDRAWAL CEREMONIES. REVIEWING STANDS WERE CONSTRUCTED AND UNITS WERE DEPLOYED TO SECURE THE WITHDRAWAL ROUTES.

21. BY OCTOBER 10, THE SHINDAND REGIMENT WAS REHEARSING A PARADE FORMATION, CIRCLING THEIR DEPLOYMENT AREAS. BY OCTOBER 17, 55 ADDITIONAL BTFS ARRIVED AT SHINDAND. THESE NEW ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS LARGELY REPLACED THE TRUCK-EQUIPPED BATTALIONS THAT HAD BEEN BROUGHT IN EARLIER SO THAT THE RESULTING UNITS WOULD APPEAR MORE

LIKE THE ORIGINAL MOTORIZED RIFLE REGIMENTS THAT WERE BEING HIDDEN OUTSIDE THE GARRISON. ON OCTOBER 17, THE MOTORIZED RIFLE REGIMENT AT SHINDAND WAS ON ITS WAY NORTH.

22. ON OCTOBER 22, THE REGIMENT FROM SHINDAND ARRIVED AT KUSHKA IN THE SOVIET UNION. IT WAS, HOWEVER, LACKING THE ADDED BTFS WHICH HAD BEEN INSERTED ONLY FOR THE DEPARTURE PARADE AT SHINDAND. THE REGIMENT ARRIVING IN THE USSR HAD TWO TRUCK-BORNE BATTALIONS.

23. ALSO BY OCTOBER 22, THE OLD MOTORIZED RIFLE REGIMENT FROM SHINDAND HAD BEGUN TO RETURN TO ITS GARRISON, WITH ITS CHARACTERISTIC TRACKED ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS AND SELF PROPELLED ARTILLERY. THE SUPPORT ELEMENTS HAD NEVER

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GONE FAR FROM THEIR GARRISON PARKING AREAS.

24. SIMILARLY, THE NEWLY INTRODUCED KUNDUZ REGIMENT WAS ALSO BEYEF UP WITH 40 WHEELED BTFS PRIOR TO ITS DEPARTURE PARADE ON OCTOBER 17. BY OCTOBER 21, THE NEW REGIMENT HAD ARRIVED AT TERMEZ, IN THE SOVIET UNION. AS WAS THE CASE FOR THE SHINDAND UNIT, THE REGIMENT WITHDRAWN FROM KUNDUZ ALSO LOST ITS ADDITIONAL BTFS BEFORE IT ARRIVED IN THE SOVIET UNION. CLEARLY THE ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS WERE TOO VALUABLE TO TAKE OUT OF AFGHANISTAN. ALSO, BY OCTOBER 18, THE MOTORIZED RIFLE REGIMENT ORIGINALLY STATIONED IN KUNDUZ HAD BEGUN TO RETURN TO ITS GARRISON.

25. THIS SERIES OF EVENTS LEAVES US AT THE END OF OCTOBER, WHEN THE SOVIETS ANNOUNCED THE WITHDRAWAL WAS COMPLETED. ALL THAT HAS HAPPENED IS THAT THE SOVIETS WITHDREW UNNEEDED, USELESS UNITS, PLUS UNITS NEWLY INTRODUCED FROM CENTRAL ASIA.

26. INDEED, REPORTERS AT THE WITHDRAWAL CEREMONIES AT

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SHINDAND NOTED MANY CENTRAL ASIAN TROOPS AMONG THOSE PREPARING TO DEPART. THE CENTRAL ASIAN TROOPS WHO WERE IN THE INITIAL INVASION FORCE WERE WITHDRAWN SEVERAL YEARS AGO AND CENTRAL ASIANS NOW REPRESENT ONLY A SMALL FRACTION OF SOVIET TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN. THAT IS MORE EVIDENCE THAT THE UNITS WITHDRAWN WITH SUCH SHOW WERE NEWLY INTRODUCED.

27. PREVIOUS SOVIET DECEPTION. THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE PRACTISED DECEPTION IN STAGING A WITHDRAWAL OR REDUCTION OF FORCES. IN AFGHANISTAN IN 1982, THE SOVIETS ANNOUNCED THE WITHDRAWAL OF SOME TROOPS

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SEVERAL WEEKS BEFORE THE MOSCOW OLYMPICS. THESE TROOPS, NUMBERING ABOUT 5,200, TURNED OUT TO BE FORCES UNSUITED TO AFGHAN TERRAIN AND TO ANTI-GUERRILLA OPERATIONS. EVEN AS THE UNWANTED FORCES WERE BEING WITHDRAWN, NEW AND MORE USEFUL UNITS WERE BEING INTRODUCED, AND THE TOTAL NUMBER OF SOVIET FORCES SOON RETURNED TO THE PRE-WITHDRAWAL NUMBER.

28. THE CHARACTER OF THE SOVIET OCCUPATION OF AFGHANISTAN WOULD NOT HAVE CHANGED EVEN IF THEY PULLED OUT THE PROMISED SIX REGIMENTS. TANKS ARE NOT VERY USEFUL IN AFGHANISTAN, AIR DEFENSE IS COMPLETELY UNNECESSARY, SINCE THE MUJAHIDIN DO NOT HAVE AN AIR FORCE. EVEN REMOVAL OF TWO MOTORIZED RIFLE REGIMENTS OUT OF TWELVE WOULD NOT HAVE REPRESENTED A MAJOR CHANGE. BUT LOSS OF THE LATTER WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ENTIRELY COST-FREE, SO DESPITE THE PUBLIC PROMISE, THE SOVIETS KEPT THEM IN AFGHANISTAN.

29. WHY A SHAM? THE SOVIETS' UNWILLINGNESS TO WITHDRAW MILITARILY SIGNIFICANT ASSETS FROM AFGHANISTAN TELLS US SOMETHING IMPORTANT. CONTRARY TO THEIR ASSERTIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCES AND BACK HOME IN THE USSR, THE SOVIETS APPARENTLY DO NOT FEEL SECURE ENOUGH TO GIVE UP ANY REAL FIGHTING FORCES. THE POLITICAL APPEAL OF THE

DRA IS NOT GROWING AND, DESPITE OVERWHELMING NUMERICAL AND LOGISTICAL SUPERIORITY, SOVIET AND KABUL REGIME FORCES ARE NOT DEFEATING THE MUJAHIDIN.

30. CHRONOLOGY OF SOVIET WITHDRAWAL FROM AFGHANISTAN
JULY: 12 SOVIET MOTORIZED RIFLE REGIMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN.
JULY 28 GORBACHEV SPEECH AT VLADIVOSTOK PROMISES WITHDRAWAL OF 1 TANK, 2 MOTORIZED RIFLES, AND 3 AIR

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DEFENSE REGIMENTS "WITH THEIR AUTHORIZED EQUIPMENT AND ARMS."

EARLY AUGUST: TWO MRRS MOVE FROM USSR INTO AFGHANISIAN.
TWO MRRS AT KUNDUZ AND SHINDAND DEPART GARRISONS.

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LATE AUGUST: TWO NEW MRRS ARRIVE IN KUNDUZ AND SHINDAND GARRISONS, EQUIPPED WITH TOWED ARTILLERY, ETRS AND TRUCKS. NOTE: NO SOVIET MRRS IN AFGHANISTAN SO EQUIPPED.

MIL-SEPTEMBER: 40 TANKS ARRIVE FROM USSR AT SHINDAND TANK REGIMENT, BRINGING TOTAL TANKS TO 62.

MID-OCTOBER: WITHDRAWAL OF UNITS BEGIN, INCLUDING 2 MRRS. WITHDRAWING MRRS DEPART GARRISONS WITH ETRS, BUT ARRIVE IN USSR WITH TRUCKS.

LATE OCTOBER: SOVIETS COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL OF 3 AIR DEFENSE, 1 TANK, AND 2 MOTORIZED RIFLE REGIMENTS.

ORIGINAL MRRS FROM KUNDUZ AND SHINDAND RETURN TO GARRISONS.

12 SOVIET MOTORIZED RIFLE REGIMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN. SHULTZ

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